

**CITY OF GREENBELT, MARYLAND
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager *MPM*
FROM: Terri S. Hruby, Assistant Planning Director
VIA: Celia W. Craze, Director of Planning and Community Development
DATE: February 24, 2016
SUBJECT: Prince George's County Zoning Ordinance Re-write –
Draft Module 1

In mid-2014, at the direction of the County Council, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission began a comprehensive re-write of the County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. M-NCPPC has contracted with Clarion consultants, a nationally recognized consulting firm, to assist with the project. The stated purposes of the project are as follow:

1. Streamline and simplify the regulations and approved development process.
2. Modernize and consolidate zones and development standards.
3. Incentivize economic and transit oriented mixed use development.
4. Protect and enhance stable residential neighborhoods.

The project is organized into four phases: 1. Public Outreach and Input; 2. Evaluation and Recommendations; 3. Drafting the New Ordinance and Regulations; and 4. Implementing the New Ordinance and Regulations. It is anticipated that the final phase will be completed in late 2017.

Currently, M-NCPPC is working on completing Phase 3 and recently released Module 1, Zone and Use Regulations and Interpretations and Definitions. Module 1 establishes three zone types (base zones, planned development zones and overlay zones). A base zone is a zone within which a single set of uses, intensity, dimensional and development standards are applied. Uses are allowed by right, allowed subject to the approval of a special exception, or prohibited. These zones would otherwise be referred to as Euclidean Zones. A planned development zone generally allows more flexibility in the establishment of design and development standards in return for more innovative and high quality development and community benefits. An overlay zone is a zone mapped over a base zone that applies standards in addition to or instead of the standards governing development in the base zone or a planned development zone.ⁱ Module 1 proposes to reduce the number of zones from 73 to 42. Attachment 1 is a table showing the current zones and how they would be changed in the new ordinance.

Staff has reviewed Module 1 and has a significant number of questions, comments and concerns which are summarized in Attachment 2. Of staff's comments, we believe the following represent the most significant issues, warranting the greatest consideration and discussion by City Council at its upcoming work session:

1. Deletion of the Residential Planned Community Zone (R-P-C) – Deletion of this zone does not provide a provision in the new zoning ordinance for the protection of Historic Greenbelt and its plan, similar or identical to the existing RPC zone
2. Deletion of the Development District Overlay Zone (DDOZ) – There is concern that a move to a more generic base zone will make it difficult to achieve the character and urban design standards developed for the Greenbelt Metro Area and 193 Corridor Sector Plan.
3. Proposal to replace comprehensive design zones and mixed use zones with base zones that would allow for by-right development without detailed site plan review and approval – This is a major departure from the current process and will not afford municipalities/the public an opportunity to review and comment on major development projects.
4. Proposal to convert the C-O and C-S-C Zones to General Commercial and Office Zone (GCO) – The GCO Zones affords a lot of flexibility and mix of uses and could significantly change the character of Greenway Shopping Center, Beltway Plaza and Roosevelt Center; as well as our commercial office parks.
5. Applicability of new zones - It is not obvious of the new zones proposed, which would be appropriate for Beltway Plaza; Greenbelt Homes, Incorporated; Franklin Park at Greenbelt Station and Greenbelt Station South Core.
6. In general, there needs to be an analysis on the issue the potential for creating nonconforming uses with the application of the new zones.
7. Mapping of new zones. The mapping of the new zones to specific properties is not proposed to occur until after the new zoning ordinance is adopted. It is critical to the discussion of the new zones, to understand what zones will apply to what properties so municipalities/the public can fully understand the implications of the new zoning ordinance before being asked to support its adoption. Also, the mapping needs to include municipal involvement.

M-NCPPC has requested that comments on Module 1 be submitted by March 1, 2016, but have indicated comments will be accepted throughout the process. Staff recommends City Council transmit a letter to M-NCPPC with the comments contained in Attachment 2. Staff will continue to review documents as they are released and provide updates and comments to the City Council as appropriate.

ⁱ Prince George's County, Maryland, Executive Summary Module 1, October 2015